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Babble o' Green Fields



Mark Wayne Williams



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BABBLE O' GREEN FIELDS

and Other Poems

BY
MARK WAYNE WILLIAMS



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O READER

I bring my fistful of pebbles
 From the beach of experience.
I, too, regret that they are not diamonds and rubies.
Child, they are better than pearls and emeralds.
They are enchanted stones;
 Fashioned by the great deep,
 Laid at your feet by the mighty tide,
That your heart might know the leap and ache
Of vast discovery, and you exclaim,
 “ Oh, what if this were chalcedon,
 And that an amethyst!”

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BABBLE 'O GREEN FIELDS
AND OTHER POEMS

BABBLE O' GREEN FIELDS

O MONSTROUS puncheon of humours, O mildew of
moon and clay,
Babble in death with thy taproom breath
O' the new green fields, the dew clean fields,
Green fields kirtled with May.

O Jack, hast green in thine eye, lad, or doth the
blessed child in thy breast
Toddl'ing linger, holding mother's finger,
In daisy-springing, brown-thrush-singing, but-
terfly-winging,
Green fields mother loved best.

Bowls and cricket are done, lad, and the censer
of twilight smokes.
Sweethearts pass o'er the velvet grass
O' the rare green fields, the fair, clean fields,
Green fields, guarded by their oaks.

Babble, they call it babble, but it's all of it gos-
pel true.
Death clears the pane. Look, lads, again,
At the aery green, faery green, ever widening
prairie green —
Green fields, dabbled with the dew.

I know fields that once were fair, queenly Ypres
merged in mud.

I hear the flail of the hell-hot hail

On the mad red fields, the sad, dead fields,

Dread fields burgeoning with blood.

God! will there never more be Spring? Or do I
babble or pray?

Bubble Tophet — babble prophet,

O' the far green fields, the star clean fields,—

Green fields kirtled with May.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THROUGH life's cathedral from my organ soul
Recessional surges of music roll ;
With invisible voices of fluting song
Nave and chancel and transept throng.
The unseen Organist in the loft
Moveth all moods from loud to soft ;
Harmonic sonance born of love
Breathes from the mercy seat above.

BACK TO BETHLEHEM

LET us go back to Bethlehem.
O'er waves and dunes; o'er wastes and downs;
Past palace turrets and seething towns;
By rough ways, smooth ways, ways white and
 red;
From marble barracks to the House of Bread;
From Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem,—
Let us go back to Bethlehem.

Let us go back to Bethlehem.
There Ruth's gleaning; the mild sheep graze;
By sweet love's deathbed Jacob prays;
David plies harp, or staff, or spear,
Or spills cold water, thrice too dear,
As he waits for his twelve-starred diadem:
Let us go back to Bethlehem.

Let us go back to Bethlehem.
Heaven's in a manger; from one grot springs
The eternal source of memorable things.
O simple of heart, from one voice rise
Angelic chorals; from lovelit eyes
Bloom star-truths on their twilight stem:
Let us go back to Bethlehem.

THE SEAMLESS VESTMENT

SOLDIERS crucified God's Son:
Hail Tiberius' throne.
One of Carthage deemed him great,
Fed on Barca's hate;
Venture-avid Philip's son
Witched the Macedon.
Cæsar, vast ambition's tower,
Lured Italian power;
Stirred Arminius' name like wine,
Freeman of the Rhine.
None knew, throned on cross above,
Manhood's King of Love.

Soldiers slew the Prince of Peace:
Grace to mob's caprice.
Lived they as the dice-box willed —
He God's plan fulfilled.
Prizing rags, they prized not Him,
Racked with tortured limb.
Sash, cloak, turban, shoes, they share:
Who shall vestment wear,—
Vestment woven of hopes and fears,
Moist with mother's tears;
Linen for priest and king's delight,
Fine and saintly white;
No patched motley, seamed and riven,—
Whole from loom of heaven?

Who is worth His coat to wear?
Cross he too shall bear.
Prophet's cloak from chariot flung
Makes new prophets strong.
Strong is he, though world enticed,
Girt in the coat of Christ.
Welcome, in such raiment dressed,
Jesus' wedding guest.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

No mask we wear ; no pistol bear ;
No foaming steed bestride ;
The stars beneath, on Hounslow heath
No lawless quest we ride.

God's holy word our girded sword,
We voice our Lord's command ;
On the King's highway in open day
We summon you to " Stand."

" Deliver "— self, not sundry pelf ;
He wants your life, not gold.
A HOLD-UP — yes, till you confess
Him who doth life UPHOLD.

AT FRISCO, 1898

THE SENTINEL SOLILOQUIZES

THE fog-horn shouts through the sounding bay,
(*Sing of battle and blood and war!*)
And the sea wind rolls up a wall of spray,
A cloud of pallid and deathful grey;
A fog of more baneful and shuddering chill
Than Indian moonlit dews distill;
And the sentinel drags through the yielding
sands
With his musket heavy and loose in his hands,
(*How the fog-horn shouts from the far off bay!*)
For limbs grow weary and eyelids weigh
With the enemy six thousand miles away.

Could battle break with the break of day,
(*Dream of battle and blood and gore!*)
With the cannon's boom and the charger's neigh;
The leaden storm where the Maxims play;
The shudder of lines as they gap and fill;
The rush of the charge to the topmost hill; —
Could there but be danger from hostile bands,
His eyes would glow through the dark like
brands.
(*Hark; only the foghorn off the bay!*)
For limbs grow weary and eyelids weigh
With the enemy six thousand miles away.

We shall return, where others may.
(Talk of battle and blood galore!)
And we'll tell the story to those that stay,
With warful clangour and brazen bray.
And the hearts of the gentle folk we'll thrill
With tales of bullets and balls that kill;
Of terrible marches and desperate stands;
Of wounds and sickness in hostile lands.
*(How the foghorn shouts from the sounding
bay!)*
And they'll never know all the time we lay
With the enemy six thousand miles away.

MOONLIGHT

A RHAPSODY

AIRILY, fairily, silver lights
In the shifting shades are lying;
Dancingly, glancingly, sylvan sprites
With the lithe moonmaids are flying.
So o'er my fond dreaming
Vague imageries fleet,
Mad melody streaming
Fantasia sweet.

Glintingly, hintingly, shadows frail
O'er the moonlit woods are winging;
Cooingly, wooingly, waters pale
To the shimmering stars are singing.
So o'er my weird runing
Soft sadnesses fall,
Love-memories tuning
A dear madrigal.

Loomingly, gloomingly, vapours foul
On hill and heath are lying;
Drearily, eerily, sombre owl
In the death-dark woods is crying.
Life's vapours are weaving
Their sad shrouds for me;
Wails the heart all a-grieving
A wild threnody.

A JUBILEE HYMN

JUBILEE! God's Church is breaking
From the fetters of man's making,
And to Christly freedom waking,—
Love and unity!

CHORUS

✱
Swell the rising chorus:
Jesus, rule Thou o'er us;
Thy word divine, effulgent sign,
Shall flame its way before us.
Ever may Thy Spirit leading
Flash Thy truths to minds unheeding.
Make us hear the Saviour pleading,—
“ May they all be one.”

Long has fellowship fast slumbered;
Long have strife and faction cumbered;
Let our evil days be numbered:
Sound Thy jubilee!

CHORUS

Bring to pass Thy garden vision;
Save Thy Church from the derision
And the shame of her division:
Sound Thy jubilee!

CHORUS

May we, round Thy cross uniting,
Strong in comradeship, be fighting
Age-long ills that cry for righting:
Sound Thy jubilee!

CHORUS

Jubilee! The isles shall hear it!
Satan's shrinking hosts shall fear it!
Fill the whole earth with Thy Spirit,—
Love and unity!

CHORUS

Swell the rising chorus:
Jesus, rule Thou o'er us;
Thy word divine, effulgent sign,
Shall flame its way before us.
Ever may Thy Spirit leading
Flash Thy truths to minds unheeding.
Make us hear the Saviour pleading,—
“May they all be one.”

THE BLIND MAN

The shadow falls upon the way
That leads from Jericho,
For now the sun with ling'ring ray
Has quenched in western waters deep his
 glow ;
But darkness lies not deeper
Mid shrouding night
Than on the eyes awaiting
For Christ to give them sight.

*Lord, I kneel to Thee,
Lord, I kneel to Thee;
Heal and save me,
Heal and save me,
Till I see, and know Thy light is for me.*

The crowds are surging through the
 street ;
They jostle through the gate,
And, helpless in his blindness, meet
The poor and pitiful unfortunate.
They tell him, " Christ is coming " ;
That " He is nigh " ;
Then o'er their motley murmurs
There wails the plaining cry :

*" Lord, I kneel to Thee,
Lord, I kneel to Thee ;*

*Heal and save me,
Heal and save me,
Till I see, and know Thy light is for me."*

The splendour of the rising day
Is on the city walls ;
The glory of his new-born ray
On dome and spire and gleaming turret
 falls ;
But brighter than its beaming
On brooding night
The love of Christ is streaming
To flood the soul with light.

*Lord, I kneel to Thee,
Lord, I kneel to Thee;
Heal and save me,
Heal and save me,
Till I see, and know Thy light is for me.*

TO SHEPHERDS WATCHING ON THE PLAIN

BALLADE

SILENCE bursts into choral chime ;
From starry spheres melodious choirs
Chant forth a message more sublime
Than prophets spake to Hebrew sires.
Hush ! hark ! The note its song inspires —
“ Peace and goodwill ”— a heavenly strain
Sung to the wakeful by their fires,
To shepherds watching on the plain.

Across far fields of glistening rime
Gleam palace dome and temple spire
Where priestly pride and courtly crime
Themselves in showy pomps attire.
Not there heaven’s harmony respire,
But breathes unto a lowlier train
In whose just breast no ill conspires —
Meek shepherds watching on the plain.

Not from Mt. Sinai’s thunderous clime,
From whose dread base the crowd retires ;
Not Nebo, where in prideful prime,
Lonely, entranced, the chief expires ;
Not from the hills, those lofty pyres
Of solitude, swells that refrain,—
But sweetly struck from seraph lyres
’Mid shepherds watching on the plain.

O Prince, grant, as our need requires,
Thy grace, new born from heaven again ;
The simple faith, the mild desires,
Of shepherds on Judæa's plain.

THE PRODIGAL

OH, fast is the fall of the cataract turning
The sheer-sided cliff to a shimmer of spray,
But faster the feet of the prodigal spurning
The home of his youth for a wanderer's way.
Ah, wide is the way, by its pleasures attended,
And giddily whisper the follies that fly,
But bitterer far than the sweetness soon ended
The husks of the swine and the filth of the sty.

CHORUS

Father, forgive me,
Father, receive me;
Far from the famine of sin would I flee.
Thy bounty hath fed me,
Thy mercy hath led me
Back from my hopelessness, homeward to Thee.
O Father! could I but serve Thee,
I would be thine through the long years to be.

Ah, drear is the waste of the waters unending
To the far driven bark in the fate-haunted gloam,
But drearier far for the prodigal bending
His recreant steps to his once cherished home.
He sees the sad wrecks of his hope once beguiling,
The ghastly reminders of once beamy day;
He longs for the light of his father's face smiling,
But shrinks in his shame and in doubting dismay.

CHORUS

[17]

Ah, sweet is the waft of the violin chorus
When budding hearts wed 'mid the blossoms of
June,
But lovelier still breathes the melody o'er us
From the heart once discordant, now thrilling in
tune.
Ah, glad was the song when the dawn stars were
singing
And hymning the glory of God among men,
But tenderer far heaven's music is ringing
For one who has come to his Father again.

CHORUS

Father, forgive me,
Father, receive me;
Far from the famine of sin would I flee.
Thy bounty hath fed me,
Thy mercy hath led me
Back from my hopelessness, homeward to Thee.
O Father! could I but serve Thee,
I would be thine through the long years to be.

HYMN

God of our life, we lift to Thee
The chalice of our emptiness.
Fill us, until Thy waters press
And overflow in ecstasy,
And our full cup of blessing lead
To the wan lips of human need.

God of our light, within Thy ray
The orient ages lie empearled;
'Tis but the shadow of the world
A moment shuts our souls from Day.
Oh, rive these clouds of doubt and sin,
And ray Thy lustrous glory in.

God of our love, the sweet appeal
Of Thee rills in the raucous mart,
And pulses in the painful heart,
And breathes where fetid vapors reel.
Hear, Saviour, our sad heart's unrest,
And hold us closer to Thy breast.

From shrouded ways we cannot see;
From love near strangled in our strife;
From death that swallows up our life; —
We cry, O Father God, to Thee.
Be Thou our Life, our Love, our Light,
Be Thou our Dawning after night.

TONIGHT

TONIGHT there kneels in her chamber
A woman lone and old,
Dim-eyed, and wan and withered,
Her hair turned grey from gold.
Alone she prayeth at midnight,
With soundless words and few,
But oh, thy mother, sinner, is praying,
Praying for you, for you.

I see the throne room of glory,
The saints and angels near;
One comes with his hands nail-piercéd,
And red from the griding spear.
Before the throne and the angels
He pleads by his passion's hue,
And oh, thy Saviour, sinner, is pleading,
Pleading for you, for you.

The skies are hushed and are silent;
Expectant breathes the night;
The star of dawning is waiting;
The sun, afar, thrills with light.
From field and forest and river
Grace waits like a blissful dew,
And heaven itself, O Sinner, is yearning,
Yearning for you, for you.

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

To God we offer praise
For His autumnal days
 And harvest cheer.
Through sunshine and through cloud
Thine Earth is garland browed,
And springing mercies crowd
 Thy plenteous year.

To God we offer praise
For all our sunless days
 Of mist and moan.
In sorrow and distress
We were not comfortless ;
Came through the wilderness
 Gleams of Thy throne.

To God we offer praise
For all our gloomless days
 With gladness bright.
Thy purer Spirit fires
Sublimed our best desires,
Floating joy's loftiest spires
 In holy light.

To Christ we offer praise
Who with us " all the days "
 Abideth aye.

Oh, lift us from the ground;
Let gracious fruits abound;
May our full life be crowned
With endless day.

THE HEAVENLY HOBO

“ Enoch walked with God ”

OH, your lord may drive his chariot
From Kadesh down to Keriot,—
Chariots of ease, chariots of ire,
Steam and steel and speed and fire ;
Limousine or a Ford machine,
Transit swift to heart's desire ;
Electric car or whizzing plane,
Earth's mechanic arts are vain ;
Edison at heaven balks,—
But Enoch walks.

Crook of knees and crunch of toes,
Peripatetic sainthood goes.
Tagged with scriptures, ragged with promises,
Windy garb to sleek clad Thomases,
Lonely o'er the liliated lawn, lonely down the lau-
relled lane,
Passing — passing — who ne'er will pass this
way again.
Tall, taller than farthest cloud ;
Eyes by sun or shade uncowed ;
Head by heat or storm unbowed ;
Stumbling never over mountain or clod ; —
He walks with God.

Uncivilised apotheosis of dissent ;
Stark Protestant, whom the galleys of custom
 never bent ;
Dweller in the shieling on the crag ;
Brooder of the universe ;
Scorner of tax collector Judas and his bag ;
Scoffer at Pluto's pride of purse ; —
Thy Declaration of Independence
The stars have written in the seas,
And the myrmidons of brute ascendance
Scattered like spray in a winter breeze,
And the crepulous horde of human ills
Fled from thy sun in the morning hills.

*Oh, your lord may drive his chariot
From Kadesh down to Keriot,—
Chariots of ease, chariots of ire,
Steam and steel and speed and fire ;
Limousine or a Ford machine,
Transit swift to heart's desire ;
Electric car or whizzing plane,
Earth's mechanic arts are vain ;
Edison at heaven balks,—
But Enoch walks.*

For he agreed to walk with God
Wherever he might be ;
And he found from London to Labrador
He was ever in God's countrie.
Ever Italian amethyst skies ; ever the thrushes in
the Black Forest sang ;
Ever rose Alpine diamond crests, and the deep
diapasons of the sea surge rang ;
Naples bay, Rhine rocks, dear English dales,
Tyrol, Trossach, fiord and canyon, water
sprays of Wales ;
Ever the fir-sloped Sierras, corn-plains green
and great ;
Ever the morn o'er the Golden Horn, or the sun-
set ruddy o'er the Golden Gate :
Blazing wastes of Sahara bloom to the old home
sod
For him who walks with God.

*Oh, your lord may drive his chariot
From Kadesh down to Keriot,—
Chariots of ease, chariots of ire,
Steam and steel and speed and fire ;
Limousine or a Ford machine,
Transit swift to heart's desire ;
Electric car or whizzing plane,
Earth's mechanic arts are vain ;
Edison at heaven balks,—
But Enoch walks.*

And God translated. I caught a butterfly's
velvet wings —
Alas for their delicate beauty, alas for petals of
rose —
Not Pope nor Dryden can capture from Homer
or Virgil who sings,
For human translation ever blights poetry into
prose.
But God, the subtler artist, from the drab of the
drudging mire
Rays roses, subliming our primeval dust to im-
mortal fire;
Turns a muddy road to a Milky Way; gives
leaden hearts sky-leaven,
And translates the prose of the common life to
the poetry of heaven.

*Oh, your lord may drive his chariot
From Kadesh down to Keriot,—
Chariots of ease, chariots of ire,
Steam and steel and speed and fire;
Limousine or a Ford machine,
Transit swift to heart's desire;
Electric car or whizzing plane,
Earth's mechanic arts are vain;
Edison at heaven balks,—
But Enoch walks.*

BYE AND BYE

OH, bye and bye the blear of April gloom
Shall burgeon to a wealth of summer bloom;
And every dawn a brighter sun shall rise,
And every day shall shimmer fairer skies.
Then with the roses shall my life enroll
The truer treasures of her deeper soul,
And in God's vineyard shall my garden lie,—
Oh, bye and bye; yes, bye and bye.

But bye and bye the meadows will be sear,
And gone will be the gladness of the year,
The beauty of the fragile rose be dead,
And all the joyous hope of spring be fled.
Then shall the winter with his arrows smite
The shrinking spirit with a shrouding blight.
Lost! from the wilderness there faints the cry,—
Ah, bye and bye; ah, bye and bye.

Oh, bye and bye the lagging hours shall fleet,
And feebler shall our fading pulses beat,
And farther shall our straining eyes discern
The land of hope for which our poor hearts
yearn.

Sweet shall the music wake our opening ears;
Glad be the greetings through a mist of tears;
Glorious the life of love that cannot die,—
Oh, bye and bye; oh, bye and bye.

A NEW LEAF

Out from the casement of the sky
Flutters a love note tenderly;
By its page, brown and sear,
Blotted by kiss and tear,
A missive from the waning Year —
My old sweetheart.

She pleads in each fine line and vein,
In sweet recall, to her again
To turn; but now a-near,
With sunny smile and clear,
Another stands, the fair New Year,
And leads apart.

THE " U " IN UNIVERSE

THE morning is winsome and bright, Love ;
Its dawning has sweetness and grace ;
But never has dawned after night, Love,
Such a dawn as the dawn in your face.

The sunshine is golden and fair, Love ;
The sunshine is golden and fair ;
But never such gold has the sunshine unrolled
As smiles in your beautiful hair.

The zephyr is fresh and so pure, Love ;
And sweet is the dew that it sips ;
Yet purer your breath than the breeze from
the heath
And sweetest the dew of your lips.

Ah, fair is the blue of the sky, Love ;
But your eyes have a lovelier hue,
For they've caught from above the pure light
of your love
That is truer than heaven's own blue.

WHEN WINDS ARE WHIST

WHEN winds are whist, and clover tops still,
Dream, Love, as the sun shines warm
And the mellow light wreathes the skyward
hill,—
Light sleep, Love, far away from harm.
For the sweetest dreams are the dreams o' day,
When you dream that your sweetheart's near
you, Dear;
And the bees hum a song of a land far away
Where the skies are aye blue, Dear, and hearts
are aye true, Dear,
And the angels and cherubim all look like you,
Dear.

When twilight gloams, and the deep woods
darken,
Wake, Love, as the moon grows bright,
And the elf-dogs bay, and elf-deer hearken,—
Love, awake, Love, to the witching of night.
For the tenderest time is the time of the stars
When your lover is sitting with you, Dear,
And Evening from heaven lets down all the bars
So that loves may pass through, Dear, and sip
divine dew, Dear,
For all earth is heaven when one is with you,
Dear.

THE CAVALIER

You are in Halsian days, my friend ; you seem
To be no memoried print, no artist's dream ;
You are alive ; and even now quite able
To take your seat at the high council table,
And drain your beady bumper twice or thrice,
And then could drink another in a trice.
Now you are strutting in a noble court ;
With gallant men and dames you have resort,
Pass the sage counsel or the keen retort.
Perhaps in war's alarm I see you stand,
With burgher pikemen subject to your hand,
Sword jewelled ; and mayhappen that you held
The walls of Leyden in that siege of eld
When through cut dykes the sea o'erwelled ;
Or on some world-winged voyage to far Ind,
Or sullen drifting by the westering wind,
The rich toll of wide commerce you have brought
To Holland's freighted hulk, scarce rendered
 taut
From tides that leap her crumbling dykes, and
 roar ;
And the still sterner rupture of invading war.
Yours was the calm strength of your seas.
You held the torch to light our fathers' way
To all that e'er man's shackled spirit frees
In learning, trade, religion, and law.
Wear your brave finery ; that gorgeous lace
Is not too noble for your manly face ;

That figured silk could find no worthier hest
Than to adorn so adamant a breast,
Whose citadel not all oppression's storm
Could shake. As the stern mountain's form,
Jagged with elemental furies, still is graced
With all fair, tender flowerets interlaced,
So weave we o'er your towering strength sublime
Rich, gracious broideries from every clime,
Unfading memories through all earth's changing
time.

THE EIGHTH WONDER

NILE's mystic mounts are brooding still,
Yet man's heart turns to a low green hill.

The Gardens blossomed on Babel's wall,
Yet a single rose tree out-bloomed them all.

The Phidian Zeus all golden stood;
Man's noblest art was carved on wood.

The Carian Marble mourns in vain;
Behold, here grief and death were slain.

At Rhodes, Colossus towered high;
A single tower has topped the sky.

Dian's Temple, sunlike, shone apart;
One shrine alone reveals God's heart.

The Pharos gleamed where navies whirled;
A nobler beacon lights the world.

Love glorified what sin made loss,
Earth's sevenfold wonder — Jesu's cross.

SESAME

DEATH is the time 'twixt the bud and the bloom ;
'Tis the moment when roses are born ;
'Tis the hush of the night ere the blush of the
light
Doth herald the halo of morn.

THE HUNT

AWAY, away across the hill;
The fox is running fit to kill;
The huntsman here is surely marking
How cheerily the hounds are barking;
And down this clear November morn
I hear them wind the hunting horn.
Just watch us, in our hunting togs,
All going swiftly to the dogs;
You see we're all aristocrats
Quite evidently from our hats.
That keen old guy in race attire
Is master of hounds and local squire;
He's rather fat and very jolly,
And would look nice served up with holly.
The Lady Clancy rides the sorrel;
Her nag is pretty apt to quarrel,
And so she keeps his rein so tight
While he pulls on with all his might.
Lord Tumpy is the last chap's name,—
A beastly rider, but very game;
Some day his horse will give a twitch
And dump him sousing in the ditch.
In front is Lady Caroline
Who thinks her pony very fine;
While he thinks she is quite entrancing
As you can gather from his prancing.
When they have chased the flying fox
Through fields and folds and woods and locks

Until the horses all are tired,
And all the scarlet coats are mired,
And all the dogs are like to drop,
And many riders come kerflop,—
Then the swift hounds the fox assail,
And kill; his lovely brushy tail
They cut as trophy of their run
And the brave work they all have done.
Today they'll give it, so I fancy,
To that sweet girl, the Lady Clancy;
And then the squire, that fat old sinner,
Will have them all come home to dinner.

WINDOW SHADES

SWIFT on the wings of Winter
Night hastens after Day,
Dark flung her ancient mantle,
Ashen her face and grey.
Keen are the Night's wind arrows,
Fierce is her lonesome cry,
And dread and cold, on wood and wold,
Is the stare of her ghostly eye.

The legions of the storm king
Come rushing to the fray,
A wild and shaggy phalanx
In horrent war array.
Shriek! as the winds are shrieking!
Shrink! in the blinding white.
While Death and Woe ariding go
On the whirlwinds of the night!

“ WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR ”

WE knew the charted heaven : sun, planet, moon,
Fell meteor and comet — reverend fires ;
Then that strange star, brighter than noon of
noon,
Wooing the soul with new and warm desires.

Beckons the Star ; we follow with the eye,
The heart, the foot ; our life was in its sway.
Onward it floated, piercing the airy sky ;
We stumbled drudging on through desert way.

It stood, a beacon o'er the trackless years ;
We found no fulgent choral throngs ; there
smiled,
Cradled in love and hope — sign worthy seers,
Worthy a star — the world-prophetic Child.

We have seen Him. The Star has paled ; the
hymn
Angelic breathes too soft for human sense.
The Child lives ; radiant, eterne, intense,
Shines, though a myriad ancient stars are dim.

NOVEMBER DAY

SUNKISSED October piles her plenteous board;
The frisking squirrel heaps high his winter
hoard;

Leaves scattered lie, like myriad warriors slain;
Broad vales gleam brightly with their golden
grain;

Fair azure skies melt into deeper blue;
Far hilltops bathe in ever mellowed hue;
Warm-wingéd zephyrs flit from bank and dune
Where wimpling waters lisp their liquid tune.

But when November comes, with brow a-gloom
Sol scantily shines through heaven's cloud-cur-
tained dome;

Eolus' cave the soft south wind receives;
While bustling Boreas shakes the scattered
sheaves;

Rustles the fallen leaves, though passing light;
Tiptilts the pigeon in her airy flight;

Brushes the bare boughs 'gainst the cottage
thatch;

Whisks through the chinks; unbidden lifts the
latch;

Chills the poor peasant; mocks the croaking
crow;

Croons through the pleasant pine trees, murmur-
ing low;

Pipes on his sonant reed a shrilling air
To rouse rough Winter from his bosky lair.

Through some bleak bower or sombre, coolly
glade

Lone wanders Melancholy, rueful maid,
In rusted raiment and of mournful mien,
To brood upon fair summer's fading scene.
Care's sable hood hath masked her brow of snow,
And furrowed grief hath laid her roses low;
A limpid sadness darkles in her eye
That ever down she casts with pensive sigh.
A frosted lily in her hand she bears;
A faded rosebud at her throat she wears;
And in her bosom's casket holds she fast
Lost loves and blighted blessings of the past.

Now trips sweet Cheerfulness at lightsome pace,
With dancing eye, and rosy, smiling face;
Her beaming brow bright-painted leaves be-
dight;

Dew diamonds deck her fairy fingers white;
All robed in sunshine is she, radiant, warm;
A zone of rainbows clasps her supple form;
And from her ivory distaff deft are spun
Fine webs of dreamstuffs rippling in the sun.

So goes November's day of shine and shade
Till dusky twilight rolls up from the glade,
And blinking stars their sleepy eyes do ope,
And Phœbus trundles down the western slope.

FOUND DROWNED

A STREAM-BORNE reek of rags; dank hair;
Grey face, blear-eyes aghast —
Look, all you live and fair!
So Death floats past!

Quick! call his father, mother, friend; —
Bear up the fearful freight!
No hurry; the dead is dead;
You call too late.

Whose crime? If God's or men's the
blame,
Bury with book and bell;
If his,— then for his shame
Cross-roads of Hell.

Insane? Is this world-orgy sane,
Drink, dice, dance, drivel, mope?
Witch-dance of sin is vain;
No God — no hope.

A LUMP OF COAL

CARBON,—cousin to the diamond,
Only substitute for sun,
Let others merit by the carat,
Thine esteem is by the ton.

Clod, thou art emperor of industry ;
Stone, thou dost melt the winter's might ;
Gloom, from thy soot the lithe flames shoot
And radiant fire illumines the night.

Black, from thy heart leaps loveliness
Lured by artful chemist stealth ;
Thy perfumes rise like flower sighs ;
Thou bindest the broken limbs of health.

Ages and cycles and æons ago
Ancient forests laughed in sun ;
Into them pent the storm winds went,
And beauty from sky and ocean spun.

Medicinal herb and fragrant flower,
Brook babble and bird trill ;
Summers and springs gave offerings
Their treasury vaults to fill.

Deep, deep, deep the ocean tides
Roared o'er the sunken shoal,
And a world's delight was changed to blight
As the forests turned to coal.

O Labour, unlock my prison!
O Fire, leap at my cry!
I shall live again in the lives of men
The glory of days gone by.

MODERN MORPHEUS

AND more to lull him in his slumber soft
A jangling chime from high tower clanging
 down,
Piano banging in the flat aloft,
Mixed with sweet caterwauls, much like the
 sound
Of cooing fiends, did cast him in a swoond.
No other noise, save autos, cars, and cries
Such as are wont to annoy the troubled town
Might enter, but sonorous Slumber lies
Wrapped in umbrageous bedclothes full of
 enemies.

RAIN AT BUNKER HILL

GREY crag, altar of flags and wreaths,
Wet with woes unspoken
I take the Eucharist Man bequeaths —
“This is my body, broken.”

— Grey rock in the vernal wave,
Wet with unable showers,
How many christenings do you crave
To melt your heart to flowers?

Grey boulder from Hate's glacier tost,
Wet with undawning grief,
When shall God pour forth Pentecost
And Love put forth her leaf?

THE OLD PREACHER

THE hymn crept to the hollow, hallowed crypt
Of silence, and each vaporous echoing sprite
Fell fainting starward; wan as early light
On sunless surges, one, strengthless and stripped,
Spake poor words, stumblingly, as fungus
lipped.

Then, as the morn from blear distaff of night
Garners pale star threads for the day-spring
bright,
Our spun gleams to his glowing focus slipped.

Wafts of warm joy, breaths of the dawning hour
Lifted the lagging sails to farther quest;
Above the woodland sang a skyborn bird;
Sweet purled the perfume from each censer'd
flower.

Refreshed we rose from that deep fathomed rest
As from a wave an angel's wing had stirred.

REVERY IN AUGUST

THE brazen sky reflects the torrid glow
Of Phœbus' chariot; and the blue expanse
Of firmament is fleckless, save the gauzy film
That hovers at the bourne of farthest earth
And veils the vast beyond.— Mid-afternoon.—
All nature lies in dreamful rest, save for
The sighing breeze that moans and dies
Upon the crested wood of oak and elm;
And Nature sleeps.

The little birds have sought the shadowed shelter
Of heavy woodlands to the right and left, or in
The apple-orchard on the rolling hill-top.

Tithonus e'en is silent, and his quavering note
No more disturbs the dreamer. Lone, a crow
Ungainly flies across to the big walnut, standing
far

Beside the summer-straightened channel of the
spring.

Grass-bedded deep I lie in the sun-filtering shade
Whose scanty leaves but scarcely slant the rays.
The tall blackberry bushes cast their shade
Across the yellowed grass; and leaves at times
Flit noiseless to the ground. Afar

The waving cornfields on the right, whose tassels
caught

The breath of summer breeze that passed
Above the dreamer.

Gold-brown are they ; and on the meadow's edges
Deep-mixed with sumac's glorious wealth of
crimson.

While the brown hills mingling with heaven's
blue,

And mantled borders with their smoky grey,
Are shading woodland green and forest dark,
Upreared afar beyond the clovered mead
Of purple, red, and white, and brown, and green,
In sweet confusion and in scent as sweet.

What is't to dream?

To feel the unreality of time ; the future, past,
The present bliss or sorrowing transferred
To misty past or future's shadow.

To feel one's soul drift out on summer vapours
And soar to the ethereal heights, and taste

The fairy potions of delight, and quaff

A finer air, pearl dew and golden light ;

To glide through intermingled time and space
All unrestrained, care-free ; yet still to know

The shimmering thread of life that holds

The soaring spirit to the mundane sphere ;

To know unconsciously the fairy airs

Are wafted from the odorous clover meads, and
that

The fairy couch is still the yellow, mellow mat
Of orchard grasses.

The angel whispers from the higher air that seem
To speak of younger day, nor when nor where

Can mind recall. What nameless joys
Inspire, what fond delight
Yet ever dreamy, mellow, misty, strange,
As though the Future held it forth, yet Past
Held in remembrance!
— A woodland valley in some charmed spot,
Secluded, cool, and from intrusion free;
With here the spring from Nature's goblet
 póuring
Down silvery rocks, and moss and flowered bank;
— The river flowing on through forest shade
And now emerging in the sun's bright beam.
While the pliant oar lies listless, comes a face,—
A shy, Undine shadow of the past,
Haunting, familiar, evanescent, strange,
That vanishes into the vapoury air. And now
The rapids roar, as though the wind
Sighed in the cedars.
And there the cornfields wave, and nearer still
The headed clover to the breezes nods.
They pass.— A vague, weird longing for an un-
 known bliss,
A wistful hearkening to a heavenly chord
Of seraph melody, as from the lyres
A faint breeze wafts from far, and leaves
The soul a-sighing.
So in the happy isle the Lotus blossoms
Hung tempting to the eye, and, eaten of,
Embalmed the spirit in their sweet

And restful spices ;
Soothing from care and hushing restless motion ;
Stilling the pulse of memory, hope, affection ;
Lulling the sense in dreamful, waking slumber
That never ceased.

AN 'APORTH OF LANGUAGE

AN acrid old abecedarian of York,
Having acromatopsy and very dyspeptic,
Did not know the abracadabra of Cork,
For his language was awfully acataleptic.

A barbate, belligerent Bashibazook
With the brawn of Barnassus and Barmecide
 blarney,
Met our friend of the blear and batrachian look
In the brumous and belluine bogs of Killarney.

Calefactory Cork and York swift circumvolve
Cataclysms of speech cacaphonous to folk
Who by aid of Crystomathies maybe might solve
How language to speak as she ought to be spoke.

WORDSWORTH

Not as the playmate of a summer's day
Sweet Poesy disported at thy side,
But as a calm and contemplative bride
She wooed the pensive hours. Not as in play
Thou lookedst on the nebulous archway
That flung across the heavens its suns of pride,
But by stern gazing, soul intensified,
Didst ravel stars and truth from shrouding
grey.

Untutored was thy mind of modes; alone
Thine eye concentered upon nature's form
Or bold simplicity of man. Unknown
To thee the wilder strife of variant storm;
But with thy pure soul rapt in high serene,
From Rydal's holy light thou view'st the scene.

THE POOL OF LONDON

THE seas are in, and the hurrying flood
Ruffles the river's baffled flow,
Whose currents of many a mingled mud
Reel toward the ocean tides below
To get a whiff of a norther stiff
That reds the face and rouses the blood
When the Baltic breezes blow.

What a dismal tangle of mast and spar,
Of funnel and tiller, of tackle and sail;
The huge hulks loom through the watery war,
And the gloomy reek which the tugs exhale
Wreathes the shrouds with its dismal clouds,
And spreads out a dense pall near and far,
And turns the daylight pale.

Amid the forest of masts and beyond,
Rise up the city's many a spire;
St. Paul's lifts a sullen dome unsunned
Near the tower of the terrible fire;
While a flag floats dim from that fortress grim
Where monarchs on captives were ever fond
Of wreaking their vengeance dire.

What ships have sailed on this turbid tide?
What navies of state and war and trade?
From a mart as wide as the world is wide
Rich argosies still at this port are stayed;

And the myriad needs that the city breeds
To the teeming, toiling folk are supplied
When their sweat and blood is paid.

O ships that fly through every clime,
I beg you not to bring to me
Sweet gums or gems or the manifold chime
Of the silvery rivers of luxury ;
I have quite enough of silk and stuff,
If you'll only bring in the briefest time
My love from a faroff sea.

PRAYER

I WATCHED where gentle childhood calm reposed
In trust so perfect, innocent, and mild;
Her breathing light and pure, her eyes soft
closed,—

So sweet the sleep the cherub radiant smiled.
No thought of harm or danger, pain or care;
The guardian presence of her Lord was there.

As to and fro the sweet breath flitted past
The portal of that human temple fair,
Each gentle heave and sigh succeeding fast
Seemed like the breathing of a soul in prayer.
Prayer is the breathing of the spirit race,
Exhaling faith and still inhaling grace.

ENOUGH

To live, not merely get a living;
Be to thine own faults less forgiving;
Shoot aspirant tendrils toward the new,
Yet rootlike cling to that proved true;

To love the garb and grace of Work,
For doubts and rights oft cloak the shirk;
To make life brother to cloud and clod;
Spend less on self, and more on God;

To yearn for flower and sea and sky,
For pictures and music and poetry,
Yet live 'mid the city's muck and roar,
And be a Christ to the callous poor;

To know sin more, nor love man less,
And still a full chalice of gladness press
To lips that bless and lips that curse,
Alike for the good and the worse than worse;

To pass forgotten, and never touch
The hem of the beauty you love so much;
To lift earth skyward a little a day;
To pay as you preach; to live as you pray; —

Though little indeed all this sufficed,
Enough to have lived in the life of the Christ.

SONNET IN A_b

MANY the wonders I this day have seen : —
The sun when first he swabbed away the tears
Dripped from the water-spout ; the saucy jeers
That from the feathery jays fill us with teen ;
The backyard with its scantness, its mud's green,
Its chips, tin cans, staves, hoops, and other
gears ;
Its voice lugubrious which whoso hears
Must fear what will be from that which has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I
write,
The janitress my attic room is sweeping
So scantly, though the dust clogs breath and
sight,
The carpet scarcely through the dirt is peeping.
Yet what, without I write all this to thee,
Is there to write about on land or sea?

OOMPS

BESIDE a dark-green suction-poomps
There lived a maiden fair and ploomps.
One spring old Death
Got hold of her breath,
For everything ends in oomps.

CHORUS

Everything ends in oomps,
Everything ends in oomps,
Her toes and thoomps
And pears and ploomps,—
Everything ends in oomps.

They laid her snugly in her toomps.
Along her sorrowing lover coomps ;
He planted a rose
Right over her nose,
For everything ends in oomps.

CHORUS

And now the red magnificent cloomps
Of odoriferous roses bloomps.
She found she must
Return to dust,
For everything ends in oomps.

CHORUS

We carol the maiden fair and ploomps ;
She's snugly lying in her toomps ;
She'll not get out,
So let us shout
Everything ends in oomps.

CHORUS

Everything ends in oomps,
Everything ends in oomps,
Her toes and thoomps
And pears and ploomps,—
Everything ends in oomps.

SUNSET AND EVENING

SUNSET

SWING high, swing low,
Over the rolling plain
The Sun swings his golden censer,
High-priest at old Autumn's fane.
The blue sky-dome is the temple,
The altar the grey earth's mould,
With its off'rings poured
From the Year's great hoard,
And its mounting fires red and gold.

From shining hands
Lavered in crystal sea,
Sweet incense rolled through the heavens
Like echoes of minstrelsy;
Then out from the radiant temple,
Reddened with sacred glow,
The Sun down sank
'Neath the curtain bank
With its fringes portent of snow.

EVENING

'Neath arching boughs of green I lie
While soft June's slumbrous hilltops rise
And shut the gloaming gates of day.
Sweet scent of roses, breathing balm,

Anear my slow-swung hammock blows ;
Faint zephyrs fan the burning brow
Of labour-weary Day.

The Moon

Dips down and peeps out from behind
Cloud-pillars shining wondrous white.
Stars radiant dance in Night's ballroom ;
Now view their myriad beauteous forms
In limpid seas, then stately move
Down heaven's high hall, and disappear
Behind the silvern veil that hides
Earth's western windows.

THERE WAS A KING

THERE was a king in Belgium,
A patron of the arts,
Who furbished palace façades,
And aped a King of Hearts ;
He broke his treaty promise,
And bled the Congo well.
There was a king in Belgium ;
Is there a king in Hell ?

There was a king in Belgium,
A lover of the folk ;
He kept his knightly honour,
And spurned the Teuton yoke ;
They crucified his country —
Famished and red and riven ;
There is no king in Belgium ;
Is there no King in Heaven ?

THE HITTING OF THE SAWDUST TRAIL

BILLY, little Billy, has been roasting Philadel-
phia,
Brimstone basting with the latest sporting news
of heaven and hell f' ye.
He's an angel Gabriel honking to make your
goose flesh creep,
And the Quaker saints are rising from their late
long sleep.
Out buzz the sinner swarm, devil's own debacle,
Bang the pans and hive them in salvation taber-
nacle.
Angora, Chamois, Cashmere, Bighorn, Backlot
breeds without the pale —
Billy-goats are hitting the sawdust trail.

Here they come, there they come, willingly as
Barkuses,
While Billy peppers epigrams into their old
carkuses.
Drunk with nut Sunday, all the highbrows scorn-
ing,
They certainly are off — at Billydelphia in the
morning.
“ Bless you, Mr. Sunday,” says the pious Presi-
dent ;
And “ bless you,” cry the converts, that crowd
the gospel tent.

“ Damn you, keep off my barleycorns,” the wall-
eyed Brewers wail,
While the boozers keep a hitting that sawdust
trail.

The ghosts of Philadelphia are a-walking in the
parks :

Penn cannot rest while Billy makes irreverent re-
marks.

Poor Richard haunts the hallowed halls, making
profuse apology

For bringing lightning on a string to blaze in
Bill’s theology.

Groans Morris, “ Oh, if only he in my place had
exchequered.”

Sighs Whitefield, “ I’m afraid he’ll break my
60,000 record.”

Says Washington, “ His recruiting would have
made the Lion quail,”

For there’s many a thousand hitting the sawdust
trail.

Jefferson mutters, “ Had I been so sulphurous of
word,

The names he calls the devil I’d have used on
George the 3rd.”

Old Independence bell is sick, “ The folks for-
sake me illy,

I’ve as much brass, more tongue and I am no
more cracked than Billy.”

He's busting high society, big business is forgotten,

All Denmark gasps to learn that Philadelphia,
too, is rotten.

Blow big your bulging cheeks of prayer to a
hallelujah gale

Till the Penrose politicians hit the sawdust trail.

Here's a toast to little Billy, may he live to lambast us,

He who stole the devil's toasting fork, and
taught him how to cuss.

Knight errant of the Gospel, may his keen lance
never fail

Till the stiff's of holy Boston hit the sawdust
trail.

IN THE LIBRARY

WHEN she goes by it seems the rows
Of classic volumes stand tiptoes,
And sunshine pours, and music plays
Through all the book-room's fretted ways,
And each dead tome with warm life glows.
I can well say from sweet heart throes
Who past my prison alcove goes ;
Each fusty hedge leaps all ablaze
When she goes by.
But then, alack, no greeting flows
From her blue eyes, no zephyr blows
A balmy kiss ; with forward gaze
Which all my yearning never stays,
She follows straight her pretty nose
When she goes by.

SONOMA

CALIFORNIA

FROM Atlantic to Pacific
Love leaps the wave and plain ;
Mountain nor sea can barrier be
For the fetterless wings of the brain.

From the city to the valley,
From glare and dust and riot,
From raking pangs, from wolfish fangs,
To home's sequestered quiet.

There brood the sun-bright mountains
Over orchard, vineyard, and down ;
The white roads wind from hills behind,
By homestead, hamlet, and town.

Through house and yard and farm,
Each pleasant, friendly place,
With silver hair and heart of prayer
Goes she of the mother's face.

Across a stormy world,
And a world so strangely wide,
Our hearts still seek dear old Dry Creek,
And there keep Christmastide.

SPRING BREAK

WHEN the skies are blue and hazy,
And the fields are bare and brown,
And the winds are kind of lazy,
And the crows are cawin' round,
Then's the choicest kind of livin'
In the meadow, by the lake,
When the winter frost's a-givin'
And the Spring begins to break.

All around me is the lullin'
Of the brooks a-croonin' nigh,
And there's wakes of sunshine rollin'
Where the clouds is sailin' by,
And the willow's hair's aglowin'
Like a glory round her head,
And the grass and flowers is throwin'
The snow covers off their bed.

Then there's music in the sobbin's
Of a lonesome summer breeze,
Or a-list'nin' to the robins
Singin' anthems in the trees ;
And a fellow dreams of heaven,
Wishin' that he'd never wake,
When the winter frost's a-givin'
And the Spring begins to break.

And there ain't a gladder fellow
When the sky turns blue again,
And the sunshine lies so mellow
On the woods and fields and plain ;
For it's joy to just be livin'
In the meadow, by the lake,
When the winter's frost's a-givin'
And the Spring begins to break.

LOVE'S BIMETALLISM

O WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, what have you
gone and done?
You'd coin the silver and the gold at sixteen
grains to one.
But America has turned you down because, if
truth be told,
They wanted silver coins, but on a standard all
of gold;
So now each silver dollar's free from silver's
venal faults
For it means there's gold to back it up in Uncle
Sammie's vaults.

When Helen says her silver hair is something
sad and strange
I say, "The gold is very nice, but still we must
have change;
And while we wouldn't rashly coin grey hairs
sixteen to one,
But love to see the tresses that the flaming gold
has spun,
Yet when your hairs are silver, Dear, by metal-
lurgic art
They bear the token value of the gold mines in
your heart."

WHAT PRICE HAPPINESS?

IN the Devil's bargain sale
Are sin-soiled remnants of happiness
Marked down from the cost of a soul, to less
Than the price of a pint of ale.

Is such happiness cheap? Beware!—
It is woven of shoddy, and shame, and sor-
row;
It will shrink, and shred, and fade tomor-
row,
And leave you the rags of despair.

Is such happiness cheap? No, never!
It is sweated from other men's laboured
fears;
'Tis stolen from loom of the yearning years,
Where humanity moans forever.

True happiness naught can buy.
When meekly we do the will of heaven,
'Tis the priceless blessing that grace has
given,
'Tis the boon of the bending sky.

ON A PASTEL PORTRAIT OF A CHILD

AH, thou art caught and held in filmy flesh,
Thou morning beam ; and though the gaudy Day
With higher light and wider scene enmesh,
Yet shall he not dissolve thine earlier ray.
Thou weavest prophetic futures in thy loom,
Purpled with promises of petalled bloom.

“ Out of the mouth of babes,” from the clear eyes
Of childhood, issues earth’s profoundest lore ;
Within thy cryptic crystal swaying rise
Unfolding visions of the Evermore ;
Within thy wreathed shell forever surge
Murmurs from ocean’s immemorial verge.

“ A little child shall lead ” ; the ascending race
Follows a lengthening childhood ; from thee flow
The subtle sympathy and magic grace
Of every family sense and social glow ;
O’er thy portentous cradle ever brood
A mother’s and a state’s solicitude.

“ Except ye so become ” ; the heavenward soul
Is a perennial childhood, sensitive,
Plastic to tender hints and soft control
Of every haunting pulse the zephyrs give.
Humanity’s divinest diadem
Bestars the brow of childhood’s Bethlehem.

EARTHQUAKES

You never mind a cyclone; you can bear a hot
monsoon;

A blizzard, or a waterspout, or twisting tough
typhoon;

But when you strike an earthquake — or rather,
it strikes you,

A thousand fearful tremours go a-thrilling
through and through.

Our old theology has had some very heavy
knocks,

And people all are waking up in spasms or in
shocks;

Some think religion's all played out, and faith is
just a-dying,

Science has tumbled Church and Book, and sent
the preachers flying.

Don't run! Let's watch the steeples go smash-
ing to the ground,—

Traditions, dogmas, theories, are crashing all
around.

A middle-aged Cathedral or a grimy old Bastille,
How they mutter, and they totter; how they
rumble and they reel!

But some things stand,— of that you may be
sure,—
Longer than stone or steel, or heaven or earth
endure;
Above the smoke and dust and din, through
crack and quake and lurch,
Stand God's eternal monuments — the Bible and
the Church.

THE CLOISTER

How pleasant is the ancient, homely church
Scarce lifted o'er the neighbour cottages
Hemming the square of green where lifts the lone
Memorial statue. On the aging walls
The ivy trails her never-dying green,
While near the blazing May shoots forth her
bloom,

Impetuous of spring. Above the thatch
Droop an acacia's branches; a fair hedge
Of holly shields the doorways; while the rose
Makes e'en the grey stone sensuous
With her rich hue and perfume; the rare arch
Of that old traceried window harbours still
The loveliness which monks' hands have be-
queathed
To those who took such heritage with joy,
But spurned what monks thought better dower
still —

A narrow faith and fierce, unkindly zeal.

Here is the heart of England; see how quietly
The home is clustered near the church; the past,
Nameless and named, stands here in this still
square
While life goes on amid such atmosphere
Of reverent institution, custom, faith.
Age leans on youth, and takes her customed
round

Along the fair walks cincturing the green,
With head and body bowed, thinking of many
 things,
While youth looks dreamy-eyed, yet does not see
Beyond the roofs of home, or the acacia's sprays,
Or brilliant hawthorn, or the ivy green.
No child plays on the lawn; the mower swings
His keen scythe through the tender grass; adoze
Are aged men upon an ancient seat beneath
The statue; while two mouldering clerks
Discuss a week-old paper whose stale news
Is the one breath in this sequestered calm.
And yet how beautiful the fringed lawn
Which smiles with many a daisy fair and mild.

THE DRAMA

THE stars are scintillating; the glittering scenes
unroll

With tinsel, blare and gaud, to cloak their
poverty of soul.

The musky fair, the sweating crowd, applaud
the silly sally,

The platitude, the mossy jest, the leer from
Leper's Alley.

So this is "nature's mirror," this humanity's
best school,—

This vapid, vaunting play that skims the sea-
son's shallow pool?

Life's teeming currents touch not here; they seek
the farther sea,

Where melt time's dateless margins in the vast
eternity.

Life's drama does not glister upon a gilded
stage;

'Tis not police court sewage, nor society's out-
rage;

Its pomp is not of parliaments, and kings and
golden lords;

It does not scream with suffragettes, nor fight
with bombs or swords.

Here's drama — that soul battling with his dear-
est sin ;
This climb through thunderous crags without ;
that burst through toils within.
And greater far, on Golgotha, in supreme
tragedy,
A Saviour crowns His dying love with immor-
tality.

FIRE AND WATER

WHAT'S half so charming as a winsome face
Rimmed in the window of a Shaker bonnet,
Blushing and dimpling, though with downcast
 grace,
While her dark hair hath gleams of rain upon it.
Ah, sweeter thus than any wilding rose
Peeped through the dewy tangle of the brier;
When snowy lids her liquid eyes disclose,
This maid-o'-the-rain doth set my heart afire.

MIDSUMMER REST

WHY dost thou in the city's fearful hum
And the hot stupors of the civic press
Endure life's fevers? Why not hither come
And in this placid field thy patient soul possess?

Here the ambrosial grasses feed the flocks;
Here the sweet nectar of the brook flows by;
Cool boughs assuage the sun's fierce summer
shocks;
While warm woods bask in silence, drowsing
goldenly.

Deft nature charms her very self; she sighs,
Leans pensive on her elbow, and looks long
Into this glowing mirror whose fair skies
And brighter hues and shapes to miniature be-
long.

The kine reflective, on the watery marge
Revolve the memory of a former feast;
One loves the laving flood, and like a barge
Stands moored and shadowed, a most philo-
sophic beast;

One quaffs the sparkling stuff and finds it wetter
Than all the cooling brews that art distils;
One broods on glassy forms that here beset her;
And one, contemplative, beholds a light beyond
yon hills.

Chop down those trees ; drain off that limpid
stream ;
Drive all those cattle to the flesher's pen ;
Build on these sites ; fog-blurr that skyey gleam ;
Crowd streets with jostled, stifling, and despair-
ing men.

Who bids? The civilising power that lifts
Weak folk to strength, that makes the lowly
great?
Nay, let me lie and watch the filmy drifts
Of sky and stream, and keep my humble shep-
herd's state.

I'll trade six million souls for only one
With me to dwell in simple pastoral bliss ;
Her amber spirit pervades the quiet noon
And lends a softer light to gentle scenes like this.

“WHEN I CONSIDER”

WHEN I consider graces constellate
In thee who art my universal sky,
Stars, moon, and fleecy clouds but aggravate
The chilly night of thine austerity.
And though thy kindly beauty dews my grove,
Shall I ne'er see the flush of morning gleam
And the rich rising of thy sunny love
Gladden the roseate hill and silver stream?
Canst thou no horoscope of love relate
From the astrology of Cupid drawn?
Is there no star reveals a kindly fate
And bravely leads the entrance of the dawn?
For the hot vanguard of the feverish day,
Grant that not Mars but Venus lead the way.

NEW YEAR'S GREETING

BACK to thy Sun, O erring Earth,
From winter's sad undoing,
And Spring shall have her second birth,
And Nature her renewing.

Thermometers can but record,
Kind hearts can rule the weather ;
Though wintry days be on the board,
Let's summer it together.

Let's have dull skies aglow with May,
Bare boughs agleam with cherry,
Have coral isles in Baffin's Bay,
And June in January.

HAPPY OLD YEAR

ST. SYLVESTER, motley jester,
Prances through Milwaukee town.
Throngs the crowd, bellowing loud,
Down and up — up and down.
Clang — clang — bells all bang —
Wild the welkin's roar.
Sirens scream, spouting steam;
Snarling discords snore.
Horns hoot — trumpets toot,
Writhing into riot;
Swirls of noise — girls — boys —
Flood the fields of quiet;
Music halls squeal squalls;
Fiddles screech in café;
Saints from church — drunks a-lurch —
Howling midnight daffy.
Zany hope — parrot dope —
Froth of frenzied brewin';
'Raus mit ihm — old pipe dream!
Hoch the happy new one!

Suddenly still the blatant trumpety noise;
Through the hush comes a holy, vast diapason,
Demiurge from the cosmic organ deaf Beethoven
 played on,
Sublime to create a dozen eternal Troys.
Then I knew that Methusaleh walked for cen-
 turies nine,

While heaven was rayed with truth ; asphodels
blue

With beauty brushed his sandals ; he drank wine
Of goodness from old beakers, beaded with
Eden's dew.

Illusion, fragrance, and mystery, prismic three
From which are woven life's fibril harmony,
Star-throated sang when earth with morn was
brave ;

Rolled with the primal seas from strand to cave ;
Swept the Eolian elms in the pristine wave
Of the wandering Invisible.

Lean thy breast
On ancient ruins ; read faded letters from cedarn
chest ;

Gaze at old paintings of old places ; range
Old memories of old millenniums strange.

Old friend, as dear as old, hand clasping mine,
Tell me quietly, with the voice of auld lang syne,
That the happy, happy old year shall not
change.

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